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# Inside Information

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## SEARCH FOR BASE LINE IN COMMUNICATIONS

Unbeknownst to many, the Congress this summer passed and the President signed a law which calls for reductions in fiscal year 1985 of \$100 million in public affairs, public relations and advertising activities in the Federal government, as well as reductions of \$250 million in Federal government publishing, printing, reproduction and audiovisual activities.

So, in a bulletin number 84-17, the director of the Office of Management & Budget asked each Federal agency to provide a 1984 baseline for expenditures in these activities which could then be reduced the desired amount in 1985.

USDA's Office of Budget & Program Analysis forwarded that directive to USDA agencies the week of Aug. 13. The directive jarred information offices in USDA agencies. An early deadline for reply (Aug. 24 back to OMB) did not help.

At their earliest joint meeting, the Public Affairs Council meeting at USDA on Aug. 21, information directors of the various USDA agencies discussed this new requirement to cut communications spending.

To define the enormity of the proposed cutback, Nelson Fitton, chief of the Publishing Division in USDA's Office of Information, told the PAC meeting that OMB itself thinks the \$250 million mentioned in regard to publishing et al may be greater than the entire amount budgeted for that activity throughout the whole Federal government.

Jim Ewing, of OBPA, offered a brief backgrounder on the OMB memorandum. He said he expected the USDA agencies to give their best estimates (later he defined these as "good numbers" and "realistic numbers") for 1984 spending in all the areas covered by the law. He said OBPA would pass them through the Office of Information for review and then forward them to OMB.

Ewing said he expected budget allowances for 1986 to hit USDA about Turkey Day in November. New targets for 1985 may be suggested at that time, he said.

One of the interesting parts of an attachment to the OMB bulletin (which seems to be a copy of a conference committee report) was this statement that some information activities are excluded from the proposed cuts:

"As agreed to by the conferees, section 2901(a)(1)(C) no longer refers to 'public information activities' as one of the areas in which reductions are to be identified. Conferees concluded that reductions are appropriate in the areas of public relations and advertising by agencies. However, they agreed that providing information on the operations of government generally or pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act specifically, should not be affected by this section."



## OUTLOOK SESSION TO SCRUTINIZE FARM BILL

Prospects for the 1985 farm bill will come under close scrutiny at Outlook '85, USDA's 61st annual agricultural outlook conference.

This year's event will take place Dec. 3-5 in Washington. Sally Michael, World Agricultural Outlook Board public affairs officer and director of the conference, said the program is "shorter and tighter than in recent years, designed to enable policymakers to receive a complete overview of world agriculture in three days."

Some points of note to date, she said, include:

(1) An earlier starting time with Agriculture Secretary Block scheduled to give the welcoming address at 10 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 3.

(2) Scheduling of all major sessions at the beginning. Following the traditional outlook speeches on the economy, agriculture and trade, two panel sessions will take place on the new farm bill.

The first will run from 3-5 p.m. Monday, concentrating on the environment for the new legislation with speakers on macroeconomics, the resource base, and trade linkages.

The second will occupy all of Tuesday morning with viewpoints on what the farm bill will contain by key officials from the Senate and House, the Administration, the farm sector and the private sector.

The customary agricultural and commodity outlook sessions will follow on Tuesday afternoon and all day Wednesday. Sessions devoted to family economics and nutrition are scheduled over the three days.

(3) An opportunity for people to listen to all sessions via 900-line service again this year plus a new feature: the ability to call in questions from outside Washington to certain follow-up sessions for major commodities by using a regular long-distance line at regular long-distance charges, not the low-cost 900-line rates.

After several major commodity sessions, an entire hour will be devoted to discussion of the papers delivered in a previous session.

The follow-up sessions will be on 900-line also, Michael said, but to provide interaction between people in the field and speakers in Washington, a regular business line for call-in questions has been added this year.

Preliminary programs and registration materials will be mailed in late September. To receive information, write to: Outlook '85, WAOB/USDA, Room 5143-So., Washington, DC 20250 or send a message via Dialcom electronic mailbox AGR072.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SEMINARS AVAILABLE

Public affairs seminars from now into December have been announced by the Professional Development Institute.

Each two or three days in length, they are held in Washington, New York and Chicago.

Subjects include: Streamlining Government Information Programs; Making Health, Science and Technology News; Media Relations; Getting Your Story on the Air; Employee Publications Layout and Design; and Writing and Editing for Employee Publications.

More information may be obtained by writing to:

The Professional Development Institute  
242 West 38 Street, Room 500  
New York, NY 10018

Or by calling the Institute at telephone (212) 840-2077.





## HOW TO GET INFORMATION....NOW!

Nancy Bevis has issued a new "How to Get Information from the United States Department of Agriculture," one of the handiest little tools anyone in the agricultural information business could ever use.

Bevis, of the Special Programs Division staff in USDA's Office of Information, last revised "How to Get" in March of this year. Still, nearly every agency listed changes for the September edition, some of them a great many changes. Quite a few changes are listed under the Office of Information.

The new directory is so current it includes John S. Kermicle as the contact at USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. Kermicle, whose new title is director, congressional and public affairs at FCIC, was correspondence review officer in the Office of the Secretary before his recent appointment.

For those who have not seen a copy of "How to Get," this 12-page simply printed directory includes the key information people in USDA and its agencies, not only in Washington but in major field offices and regional information offices as well.

In addition to the nearly 9,000 copies of this directory ordered for distribution within USDA, land grant universities, state departments of agriculture, Library of Congress and others, another 1,500 copies were ordered for distribution at USDA's upcoming annual Outlook Conference.

If you don't get a copy within the next couple of weeks and would like a copy, contact Bevis at Room 536-A, Special Programs Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or at AGR001 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or phone her at (202) 447-7454.

## COMMUNICATIONS AT THE CROSSROADS

The theme of the 1984 conference of the National Association of Government Communicators is "Communications at the Crossroads." The conference is scheduled for Nov. 14-16 at the Rosslyn West Park Hotel in Arlington, Va.

Chair of the NAGC conference this year is Vince Phillips, deputy assistant to U.S. Agriculture Secretary John R. Block. Phillips, in the Office of Public Liaison, is responsible for coordinating hundreds of groups seeking seminars and briefings from USDA in Washington.

Others from USDA serving on the program committee are David Carter, public affairs specialist with the Economic Management Staff, and Stan Prochaska, chief of Special Programs Division in the Office of Information.

Conference topics will center around five tracks:

- Cutting edge of technology--the role of hi-tech in government communications
- Management and professional skills for the government communicator
- Speechwriting and presentation
- Broadcasting
- Publishing and marketing.

Registration fees for NAGC members, if submitted before Oct. 15, will be \$175, and \$195 after Oct. 15. For non-members, registration fee will be \$210 if received before Oct. 15, and \$230 if received after Oct. 15.

For additional information and a copy of the registration flyer, contact NAGC, 80 South Early Street, Alexandria, VA 22304, or call (703) 823-4821.

In addition to the regular 2-day conference and workshops, a half-day "preconference symposium" will be held. It will deal with concerns relating to the government's responsibilities in providing information to the public.





## MAIN STREET GOES SATELLITE

Successful strategies for the renewal of America's Main Streets will be the subject of a seven-city videoconference slated for Sept. 18.

Sponsors are USDA's Office of Rural Development Policy, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The 5-1/2-hour videoconference will originate from the BizNet studios of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

Video & Film Division of USDA's Office of Information will videotape an introduction by Secretary John R. Block, a closing statement by Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development Frank W. Naylor, Jr., as well as statements from spokespersons for the National Endowment and the National Trust.

Jeffrey Soule, who is project coordinator in ORDP, explained that the program was developed by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust. It will include case studies by the Center's staff, talks by experts in design and economic development and local Main Street project leaders.

Regional centers for the videoconference are Olympia, Wash.; Denver, Colo.; Jefferson City, Mo.; Bloomington, Ind.; Tallahassee, Fla.; and Hartford, Conn.

Other towns can also receive the videoconference by contacting the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036. The Center's telephone number is (202) 673-4219.

Arrangements have been made with the Learning Channel to send the program via satellite to local cables systems or portable satellite dish stations.

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## AQUI SE HABLE ESPANOL

Learning to effectively communicate with a non-English speaking segment of the population can be a major challenge.

USDA agencies have had a recurring problem with Spanish-language translations, making sure they are both accurate and in the language appropriate for the target audience. Although language is a common bond, it is not a common denominator, notes Phil Villa-Lobos, Hispanic public affairs specialist in the News Division of USDA's Office of Information.

The problem is how do we translate to best reach the Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican or Latin American? Should you translate three or four different versions for each target audience? How do you tackle words that have two widely used translations, such as "turkey," "orange," "beans?"

Much of the Spanish spoken in Mexico and in the Southwest United States is influenced considerably by the language spoken by the Uto-Aztecs--Nahuatl. Therefore, the European or Caribbean-influenced Spanish speaker may translate "turkey" as "pavo" while the Mexican uses the Nahuatl word, "guajolote."

If you are thoroughly confused now, perhaps it should be said early on that all is not lost.

Villa-Lobos is working on a glossary of terms to assist all Spanish translators. He hopes that in the future a copy of this glossary will accompany the instructions for contractors from outside USDA.

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INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, State Departments of Agriculture and Land Grant Universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or to AGR002 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

